



Living
Goodwill BLUE.
Transforming
Lives.

Goodwill 
of the Finger Lakes 



We delight in the beauty
of the butterfly,
but rarely admit the changes
it has gone through
to achieve that beauty.
~ Maya Angelou

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Those Who Guide Us to Transform

On the Topic of Transformation and Our “Live Goodwill BLUE Values”

- Be Trustworthy
- Live a Culture of Belonging
- Unleash Potential
- Embrace Collaboration

Our values are the expectation of how employees of Goodwill treat each other, visitors, and the communities we serve. Our mission includes elevating people, and our values are the foundational behaviors to achieve our mission and our vision.

Goodwill of the Finger Lakes is a complex organization doing one simple thing. Through all of our divisions—our **vision services**, social enterprises, **211 and 988 hotlines**, **Good Neighbor Program**, and **Learning Academy**—we provide tools and resources that people can use to transform themselves.

In this Annual Report, we tell stories of transformational change and how they synch with our **“live Goodwill BLUE”** values. We show how **Kim Kline** brings his personal experience of adapting to progressive vision loss to his work in our IT department. As GFL takes on new software platforms and other technologies, Kim is charged with creating new modifications that allow blind and visually impaired workers to use them successfully.

Working on GFL’s 988 Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Hotline, counselor **Penny Sterling** and supervisor **Andrew**

Conley bring personal lessons learned to their work. In this report, they explain how their own life challenges have equipped them to respond effectively and empathetically to people seeking support on this crisis line.


We also share the story of a talented student who reconnected to reading through our Goodwill Learning Academy, the work GFL’s Sustainability Team is doing to revolutionize the recycling of textiles, and the benefits a new cutting machine has brought to our Industrial Sewing social enterprise, which employs **55** individuals who are blind or face other barriers to employment.

These are a handful of a thousand stories we could be sharing, one for each of the **184,908** people GFL reached last year. In every story, Goodwill provides the connections and tools; individuals we reach bring their energy, will, and desire for transformation.

GFL’s success requires a third partner as well—our supporters. We are truly grateful to YOU as individuals and as an organization who provided the resources that made these transformations possible. With thanks, this report is dedicated to YOU.

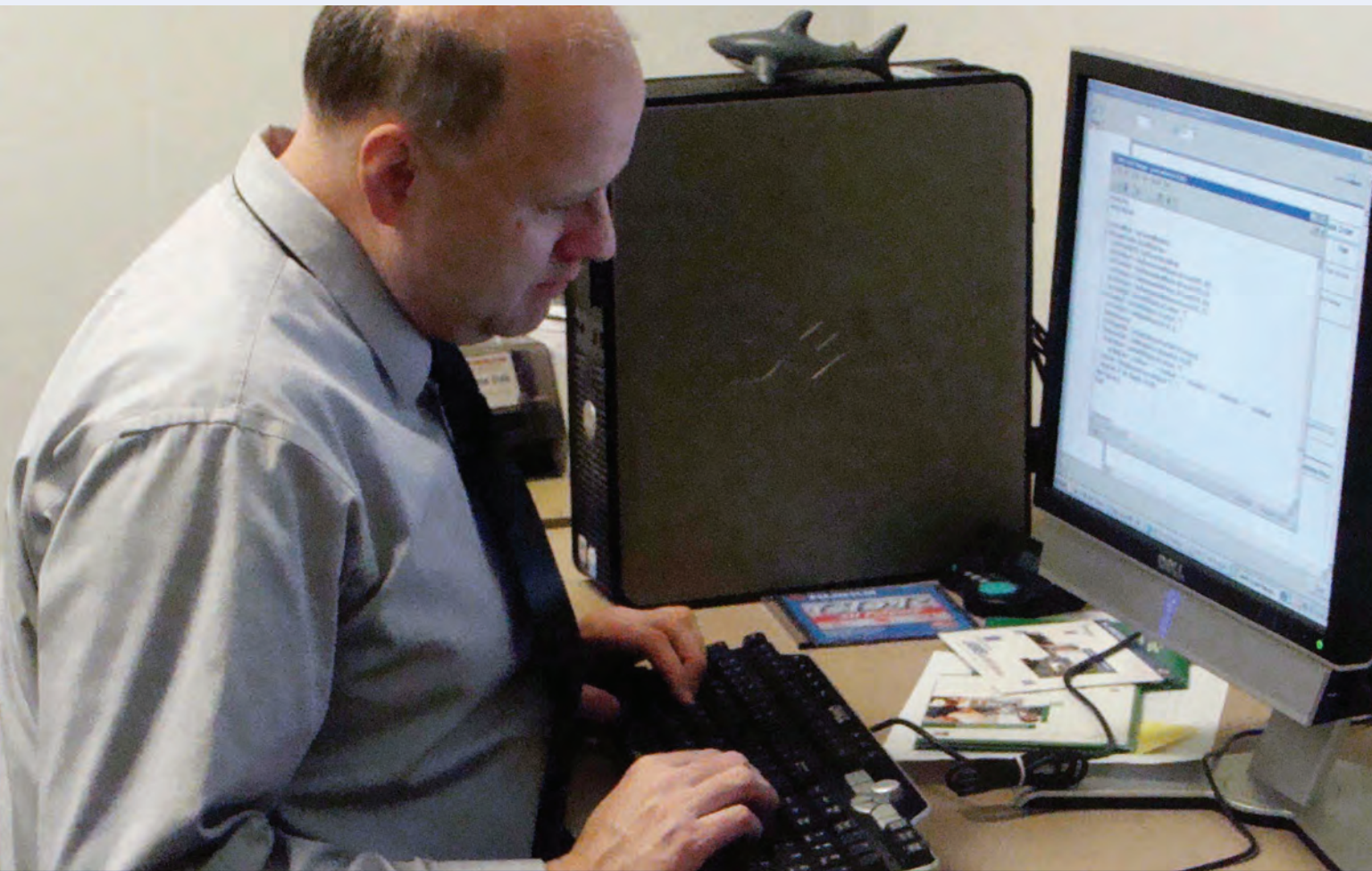


Jen Lake
President & CEO



John Harrington
Board Chair

Those Who Adapt—Will by Nature—Transform



Change
Improve
INNOVATION
PROCESS
DEVELOPED
STRATEGY
RISE
ADVANCEMENT
Growth
EXPANSION
Progress
MODIFY
REFINEMENT
Evolve
Transformation
CREATIVITY
Development
RESULTS
PROMOTE
Adapting
Modification
Build
IDEAS
PROGRESS
IMPROVE
RENEWAL
Metamorphosis
Strategies
Reorganization
ALTERATION
CHANGE
REBUILDING

Be Trustworthy

Kim Kline & Access Technology

B

Finding meaningful work can be difficult for anyone, but for the blind and visually impaired, the barriers can be exponentially larger. **Kim Kline**, who has dealt with progressive vision loss throughout his life, has first-hand experience with these barriers. He pivoted from his original career because the adaptations he needed did not yet exist, and struggled through challenging years before learning programming languages and **joining the organization 34 years ago to be a trainer in adaptive tech**. After 14 years in

that role, he **pivoted again to developing adaptive solutions in the IT department**.

Adaptive technology can refer to any modification of technology that allows people with disabilities or physical impairments to use that technology. In Kim's work, these adaptations take many forms, including programs that read out or enlarge text and refreshable braille displays. As **Goodwill of the Finger Lakes [GFL]** takes on new IT systems, it's Kim's job to develop new adaptations—original, untested solutions that put his creative problem-solving to 'live goodwill BLUE' use.

Kim first did this work at GFL during a period when his genetic eye disorder was progressing and he was losing the limited vision he had. This means he was **adapting IT technologies while also adapting his workspace and his home**, applying his inventiveness to these simultaneous challenges. As Kim says, it was a matter of **“physician, heal thyself!”**

Lisa Jackel | Director of IT Services

“Kim meets challenges head on, and doesn't give up until he finds a solution.”

Kim's integrity has been showcased in his recent achievements involving **GFL's migration to the Salesforce software** platform. Many of the platform's controls, Kim discovered, did not work well with text-to-speech programs. For example, where sighted

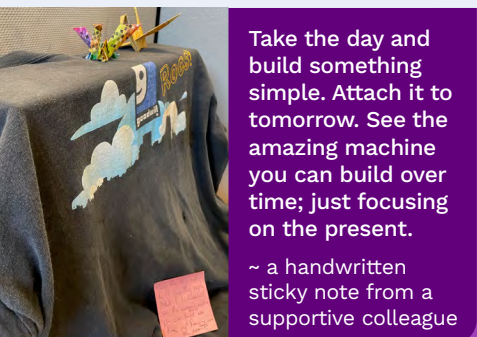
people can use a computer mouse, people using text-to-speech programs typically use the keyboard to navigate. Kim's adaptations made the program usable with only a keyboard. He also adapted the visually busy screen to make it easier to interpret. **Using Kim's innovations, Goodwill Vision Enterprises' blind and visually impaired staff have been able to use the software platform effectively, allowing the Contact Center to grow and its valued employees to succeed.** Kim's dedication and reliability throughout his 30+ years at GFL has led other areas of the organization to seek out his expertise in order to provide professional opportunities in which blind and visually impaired employees can thrive.

Those Who Live a Culture of Belonging



Penny Sterling | Crisis Counselor
“we have to listen actively, with our whole heart and whole soul.”

Andrew Conley | Crisis Supervisor
This is difficult work. “there is nothing else in the world except the person you are talking to,”



Take the day and build something simple. Attach it to tomorrow. See the amazing machine you can build over time; just focusing on the present.

~ a handwritten sticky note from a supportive colleague



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Community Program of Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

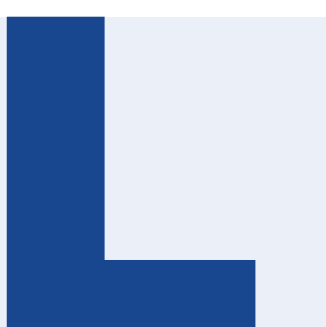


988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Community Program of Goodwill of the Finger Lakes



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Community Program of Goodwill of the Finger Lakes

Lived Experience of 988 Front-Line Staff



GFL has operated the **211/LIFE LINE** hotline program since **2005**, handling crisis calls along with inquiries related to food insecurity, disaster response, housing instability, senior services, and similar matters, so it was well-prepared for the new challenges. Two years ago, when the US launched the 3-digit dialing code **988** (previously known as National Suicide Prevention Lifeline), GFL was well positioned to take on this new challenge and expansion of crisis and suicide prevention hotline work.

GFL quickly scaled up to answer more 988 calls, texts, and chats so that our 211 front-line staff can continue to address nonemergency needs while the 988 staff handle contacts related to suicide and mental health crises. Currently the combined 211 and 988 teams—**80 staff in all**—serve **nine counties**: Monroe, Wayne, Seneca, Ontario, Livingston, Cayuga, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates. On its own, our GFL **988 team** receives approximately **1,200 calls** and **1,000 chats or texts** monthly. Nationally, a key reason for creating the 988 system was to reduce the use of 911 for mental health crises, as that often triggers a law enforcement response. This year under 2% of 988 contacts have resulted in a 911 call.

Penny Sterling, Life Line Crisis Chat & Text Counselor, finds her work informed by many life experiences, including being a parent, serving as a 12-step sponsor, becoming physically disabled, and transitioning to live as a transgender woman. From lived experience, she understands what it's like to be in deeply painful situations, and what it's like to survive, grow, and go on to thrive. When someone contacts 988, she can authentically validate their experience. As Penny puts it, **“I know what it's like to have a very, very, hard time and then have somebody discount it.”** But she can also tell people in distress, with conviction, that the possibility of joy and connection lies on the other side of a crisis. She says, **“I can't think of a mistake you cannot recover from—except ending your life.”**

This is difficult work. Typically, a Crisis Counselor responds to a stranger at a very intense, painful moment in that person's life. For that moment, **“there is nothing else in the world except the person you are talking to,”** says the 988 team's supervisor, Andrew Conley. As Penny Sterling describes it, **“we have to listen actively, with our whole heart and whole soul.”** Then the contact is over, and in most cases, in Penny's words, **“You don't know how the story ends.”** A big part of Andrew's job as NYS Lifeline Crisis Chat and Text Supervisor at GFL, is to attend to the wellbeing of his team. From his own lived experience as a person with a mental illness, he has developed healthy strategies for processing the workday, including connecting with his community and getting out in nature. Penny takes long bike rides to relax. Both of them take enormous satisfaction and pride in their work. It's not every job that gives you the opportunity to change lives every day. Andrew describes it as **“having my work aligned with my values,”** adding, **“I can't imagine it any other way.”**

Removing Barriers Unleashes Potential Within Us All



If you want to fly, you
have to give up the things
that weigh you down.

~ Toni Morrison



Mandy: “No one was listening.” This is the key difference with her experience at **Goodwill Learning Academy** and why she now feels prepared to succeed.

Unleash Potential:

Our Goodwill Learning Academy

U

More than 40,000¹ adults in Monroe County don't have a high school diploma, placing them at far higher risk of experiencing poverty, unemployment, and underemployment than their neighbors who do have this essential credential. In New York State, the typical routes to high school accreditation come with barriers, such as the need to pass Regents-based exams or complete college credits. According to educators at the **Goodwill Learning Academy [GLA]**, the **National External Diploma Program [NEDP]** can be one of the best ways for students to achieve their goals.

The NEDP isn't test-based, so a person can't simply fail. They take different amounts of time, but they can get their diploma once they are able to persevere.

GLA coaches look holistically at prospective students and develop strategies for their achieving their goals. Many barriers prevent individuals from accessing the program, transportation being the most prevalent. **GLA** provides **Go Cards**, so students can take the bus to the program. Food scarcity can be a barrier, making it extremely difficult for students to maintain focus and retain information. To address this, staff works with a local food bank to provide free lunches. A mural painted by students decorates the office, free coffee and snacks are always available—are the ways staff make the space inviting and productive. For many, **GLA** goes beyond education to build relationships. The beginning of a session is often dedicated to discussing the student's current struggles and working through possible solutions. **GLA coaches** draw on GFL's other resources, such as **211**, to connect them to services. Staff understand that NEDP is not always the perfect fit. Our **Education Success Coaches** help develop pathways that fit student needs and objectives—even if these lead to other area programs. GLA currently serves **31 students**, and is quickly growing and exceeding the capacity of the present staff.



An avid reader as a child, **Mandy W.** abruptly stopped reading at sixteen. As she dealt with more challenges in her personal life, it became near impossible to keep up with schoolwork, especially without responsive educators. As she recalls, “No one was listening.” This, Mandy feels, is the key difference with her experience at **Goodwill Learning Academy** and why she now feels prepared to succeed. GLA coaches listen and care about her and work with the pace she sets. When Mandy started at GLA in January, she hadn't picked up a book in twenty years. She immediately fell back in love with reading. Her favorite genre: thrillers.

Latest note: on our **Goodwill of the Finger Lakes** horizon, our **Excel Center** independent school application is being submitted and we hope to open the first high school for adults in NYS with our partner the **Urban League of Rochester**.

At Good Neighbor, helping people is at the heart of what we do.



Good Neighbor Navigation Hubs: At Good Neighbor helping people is at the heart of what we do. Within the Goodwill of the Finger Lakes region we currently have 5 Good Neighbor Hubs supporting our communities including: Canandaigua, [above] Greece, Webster, Syracuse; and our official ribbon cutting last August the CCD [Community Connections Desk], sign above as seen at the Hall of Justice, in partnership with the 7th Judicial District.

Canandaigua and Our Good Neighbor Program



Soon after our ribbon cutting at our Canandaigua Store, Ontario County was hit by a 100-year-storm that triggered catastrophic flooding in Canandaigua.



John [JT] Squires, our Community Navigator for Canandaigua's Good Neighbor Hub, took part in Goodwill's emergency response, working alongside colleagues like **Dawn Martinez, the Canandaigua Goodwill**

Store Team Leader, to meet the city's urgent needs. JT recalls helping a single mother of several small children who had moved the day before the flood, meaning that everything the family owned was in cardboard boxes on the floor of their new apartment. Having been evacuated, the family returned home to find all of their possessions destroyed. Through the **Good Neighbor Program**, JT provided the family with wardrobes, games, and toys. He used community connections to ensure the mother and children had meals and financial support until they were back in a stable situation. He describes how gratified he was when she returned to Goodwill two weeks after the flood with her youngest child to thank him.

In responding to the Canandaigua flood, JT and his colleagues at Goodwill benefited from the teamwork made possible through the **Partnership for Ontario County**, which organized several community-based organizations to work alongside the **Good Neighbor Program**. Shortly after the flooding another storm threatened the region, and Goodwill joined the massive effort to deliver and set up sandbags to protect homes in the most vulnerable areas. One year after the floods, a tornado moved through Canandaigua, uprooting trees and damaging homes and utility poles. As climate change brings increasingly severe weather to the region, JT and others in the Good Neighbor Program expect to be increasingly called upon to help their neighbors prepare and recover.

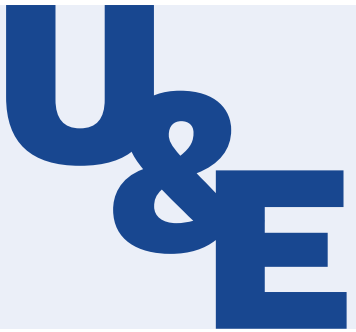
Deborah Turner | Director of Crisis and Referral Services: In collaboration with our Good Neighbor Program, 211/LIFE LINE took the lead in screening over **100 households** to get connected to both immediate and long term recovery resources.

JT Squires He/Him | Community Navigator for Goodwill's Good Neighbor Program:

Husband and wife team, Darryl and Marion Gill, originally came to **Good Neighbor** from the **A4TD program** and have since retired from that program. They now volunteer on their free time several days each week. They are well-known to our regular shoppers, case managers, and store associates. You can find the Gills assisting in filling orders, chatting with shoppers, and offering a friendly smile. We are very lucky to have them!

Unleash Potential & Embrace Collaboration:

Sustainability & Synergy with Our Sewing Dept



In the U.S. alone, an estimated 11.3 million tons of textile waste ends up in landfills yearly—over 85% of all garments produced each year. Goodwill plays a key role in disrupting this cycle by providing a way for donated clothes to be reused through resale. This year, GFL is taking this idea further, gifting apparel that isn't sold in our stores to local and regional nonprofits and to those who need it most through our Good Neighbor Program.

As the post-consumer textile industry matures, GFL is on the front lines of organizing a regional HUB of nine Goodwills across the Northeast United States. The goal is to develop sustainable solutions beyond our resale stores. The Northeast Hub reaches approximately 1/3 of the U.S. population, creating economies of scale around textile circularity, making it more economical to transform worn clothing into new garments.

In addition to our regional partners, Goodwill of the Finger Lakes collaborates with universities, research organizations, technology innovators, and corporations in the global race to solve the textile waste crisis. Fiber blends, synthetic dyes, zippers, buttons, tape, and tags remain obstacles to achieving textile circularity. As new technologies emerge, GFL is retooling operations to lead the way in finding solutions.

This year, Goodwill of the Finger Lakes' Industrial Sewing Department took steps to reduce its fabric waste with a new cutting machine. The department, which makes uniforms for government agencies—including **Coast Guard** trunks, **Air Force** and **Space Force** Physical training pants—previously relied on outside contractors for fabric cutting, leaving textile waste management out of our control. Now, the department is cutting fabric in-house and collecting scraps for recycling.

The new cutting machine has improved quality, productivity, and flexibility. It features protective sensors that prioritize safety for vision- and hearing-impaired operators. Of the **80** Rochester-area residents employed in GFL's manufacturing enterprises, **over 50** are legally blind. As the Sewing Department grows, the new machine will help create more jobs and allow GFL to invest more in our local communities.

GFL's 2023 fundraiser, "Sustainability Under the Stars," featured a fashion show where style met sustainability. We celebrated fashion both chic and eco-friendly, showcasing thrifted clothing restyled for new life. The annual event raises money for other essential community programs like **Goodwill's 211/LIFE LINE, 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Vision Enterprises,** and **Good Neighbor Program.**



ReFashionED: An educational and collaborative program encourages area students to work together to curate, price and sell recycled clothing at our Goodwill of the Finger Lakes retail stores in effort to raise funds for their school or community project. Sponsored by our Good Neighbor Program.

Sustainability



Karen Nozik | Sustainability Manager: The fashion industry is a major contributor to environmental pollution, but thrifting and reusing clothing offer a powerful antidote to our throwaway culture. By keeping garments in use longer, we reduce the demand for new production, embracing the circular economy. Donating to and buying from retail thrift stores is like a river that never stops flowing, giving new life to items that might otherwise be discarded. As these possessions are passed along, they are transformed—waste becomes value, much like how a river revitalizes everything in its path. This continuous cycle of

reuse and renewal reflects the natural process of transformation, conserving resources and nurturing both the environment and society as a whole. **Goodwill transforms not just clothing, but the fabric of our GFL communities—turning once cast-off items into something cherished and enduring—for the benefit of both people and planet!**

The Journey of Your Donations at Goodwill

In calendar year 2023, we diverted over **27.6** million pounds of goods from landfills. This process all starts with YOUR donations!



Those Who Help Us Create Our Greatest Impact



Award Winners, Board Members and Auctioneers—O, MY!

Goodwill of the Finger Lakes Gala 2024:

211/LIFE LINE: Elevating Community. Empowering Connections.

The Goodwill Gala, co-hosted by Goodwill of the Finger Lakes and Smola Consulting, brought the theme of “Elevating Community, Empowering Connections” to the Hyatt Regency in downtown Rochester on March 9, 2024. Funds raised at the event—**over \$225K**—support GFL’s 211/LIFE LINE, a free and confidential phone, chat, and text service that operates 24/7, connecting our neighbors across the region with the services and resources they need.



The Gala honored two individuals whose work embodies GFL’s core purpose—across our many programs—of providing tools and support that individuals can use to transform themselves. **Dr. April Aycock**, Director of the Monroe County Office of Mental Health and President/CEO of Awareness Counseling Services, received **GFL’s Good Neighbor Award**, and **Kevin Lynch**, President/CEO of National Industries for the Blind, received the **Dr. Gwen Sterns Visionary Award**.

And we bid farewell to **Sue DiPiazza**, a retiring GFL employee of nearly two decades. Ms. DiPiazza addressed our Gala guests, telling the story of her own transformation: from a low period that included a DUI arrest and the experience of homelessness, through a long career of service and meaning, to this point of reflection on the powerful impact GFL has had on her life. GFL was there for her when she reached out to a hotline we were operating back then - a predecessor to our 211/LIFE LINE - and with this encouragement she found the determination to enroll in Monroe Community College. With the credentials in food administration she earned there, she returned and got a job at a place that already meant so much to her—Goodwill of the Finger Lakes. [\[Gala photos by: Stephanie Alane Photography\]](#)



Those Who Lift Us Up

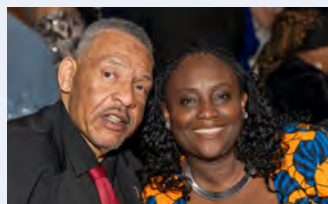
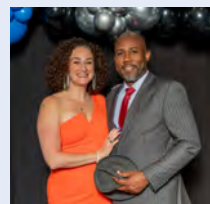
Our 2023 - 2024 Donors

\$25,000+

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Our 2023 - 2024 Donors

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Those Who Lift Us Up

Our 2023 - 2024 Donors

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Consolidated Financial Summary

| | YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2024 | YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2023 |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Revenue | | |
| Public Support | \$19,022,078 | \$16,985,282 |
| Program Revenue | \$8,109,330 | \$4,174,033 |
| Sales Revenue ¹ | \$43,696,834 | \$42,577,216 |
| Other Income ² | \$970,684 | \$1,371,512 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$71,798,926 | \$65,108,043 |
| Expenses | | |
| Manufacturing | \$11,825,284 | \$10,108,058 |
| Vision Rehabilitation | \$1,001,185 | \$1,002,656 |
| Food Service | \$1,186,400 | \$1,098,660 |
| Retail | \$40,969,576 | \$37,112,931 |
| Contact Center | \$2,688,751 | \$3,147,877 |
| 211/LIFE LINE | \$5,399,759 | \$3,643,945 |
| Workforce Development | \$355,226 | \$600,978 |
| Development | \$438,284 | \$515,963 |
| Administration | \$6,312,948 | \$6,080,414 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$70,177,413 | \$63,311,482 |
| Change in Net Assets from Operations³ | \$1,621,513 | \$1,796,561 |

1 Sales Revenue = Contact Center + Food Service + Manufacturing + Goodwill Retail + Vision Rehabilitation

2 Excludes non-operating income/expenses such as change in pension funding status, gain or loss from interest swaps, and net investment returns

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT NUMBERS

2023-24 Fiscal Year

Goodwill 
of the Finger Lakes

184,908 SERVED



27.6 Million
pounds of stuff diverted
from landfills

GOODWILL
VISION 
ENTERPRISES

450 | **243**
people received | served & trained with
Vision Services | Workforce Development

6,812 COUNSELED
988 | SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

under 2% of 988 contacts have resulted in a 911 call
or in other words required emergency services

174,831

2.1.1

Got Connected. Got Help.



Good Neighbor

2,572
Households Supported
≈ 7 HOUSEHOLDS PER DAY

Goodwill 
of the Finger Lakes

422 S CLINTON AVE ROCHESTER NY 14620



BLUE MORPHO: Gleaming in the air, the iridescent blue morpho protects itself from predators using the power of light.
Reference: www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/spotlight-blue-morpho.html

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